

UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL
30 January 1983

"Lessons of Vietnam" sought at big conference a decade late
By DOUGLAS DOWIE
LOS ANGELES

The largest group of experts on the Vietnam War ever publicly assembled gathers this week to determine what lessons can be learned from the long and bitter conflict before their knowledge is lost forever.

More than 85 journalists, U.S. and South Vietnamese policy makers, veterans, former spies, Army generals, filmmakers and anti-war protesters will take part in "Vietnam Reconsidered: Lessons from a War," which opens Monday with film and photo exhibitions.

Next Sunday, experts ranging from Daniel Ellsberg, the man who leaked the Pentagon Papers, to Gen. William Westmoreland's chief spokesman in Vietnam will review the war in four days of panel discussions.

Harrison Salisbury, a former correspondent for The New York Times and one of 12 Pulitzer Prize-winning reporters taking part, chaired the panel that helped plan the meeting at the University of Southern California.

"The idea of having a conference has been talked over among correspondents for several years," Salisbury said in an interview. "Many people have had a feeling that there were a lot of lessons which could be learned, that should be learned, but which were probably going down the drain because nobody sat down and began to analyze what had gone wrong and what had gone right."

The conference covers nearly every facet of the war -- including its origins, the impact of print and broadcast journalism and the war's effects on veterans, Americans, Vietnamese and the armed forces.

Other panels will discuss the anti-war protest movement and the role of the CIA.

* * * * *

Harper and Row plans to publish a book on the conference to be used in high school and colleges, with much of it to be written by Salisbury, who called the war "the most traumatic experience of our time."

* * * * *

EXCERPTED